

Chapter II - A New Engineer District Is Formed

No ordinary domestic disaster, Tropical Storm Agnes stretched the capacity of emergency relief structures at all levels to the fullest. There was not just the problem of the damage itself, there was the problem of how best to cope with it. Many of the state and local governments in the areas affected were simply unable to fulfill even minimum requirements of a recovery effort. Their emergency plans were in varying degrees of readiness, their leaders were often uninformed or inexperienced and their monetary resources were scarce. Of course some areas responded admirably, demonstrating unbelievable vitality in the face of overwhelming odds, but even they needed help.

Quick, full, effective response was a problem at the federal level as well. There, again, the magnitude of Agnes' damage was the determining factor. The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), for example, had met temporary housing requirements before, but never had the number of units required been so high. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had much experience removing debris, but this time the debris was massive. The Engineers would be asked to do much more in the way of recovery, while regular Corps construction projects continued. Bureaucratic delay was inevitable, particularly at the federal level. With varying degrees of success, most agencies attempted to deal with such delay and with the overall problem of how best to help the people.

The Corps of Engineers met the growing

challenge of the Agnes recovery effort by putting together a new administrative creature — the Susquehanna Engineer District (SED) — to deal solely with work under Public Law 91-606 in Pennsylvania and New York. The idea originated with General Richard H. Groves, division engineer of the North Atlantic Division, near the end of June. Several factors convinced Groves that some action had to be taken within the Corps itself.¹ As the Corps of Engineers handled missions assigned by the Office of Emergency Preparedness in the first days after Agnes hit, Groves, in whose division most of the storm's destruction was located, observed the heavy burden placed on the division and on individual districts, particularly the Baltimore District. Prime considerations in evaluating how effectively the Engineers could continue to fulfill their Agnes mission were not only the amount of disaster-related work but also the Corps' existing workload. How much responsibility OEP would assign the Corps was unclear and the existing workload was substantial. For example, Baltimore District, the district most devastated by Agnes, had the extremely high Congressional interest job of building a new complex for Walter Reed Army Hospital, a contract exceeding \$100 million. Moreover, it was the end of a fiscal year, "the most traumatic time that one has in a district."² From the point of view of the Baltimore District Engineer, Agnes could not have come at a worse time.

Believing the workload from Agnes justified

a new district, Groves got approval from General Frederick J. Clarke, Chief of Engineers, to go ahead.³ Groves had dealt with emergencies in the past, and, according to NAD Deputy Engineer Richard J. Hesse:

It was his repeated observation... that there's a great tendency... to go on forever. People will make a career of one emergency if you will permit them to.⁴

Groves' emphasis, therefore, was to define the problem, mobilize the resources, accomplish the mission and extricate those under his command as soon as possible in order to concentrate on his division's normal workload again.

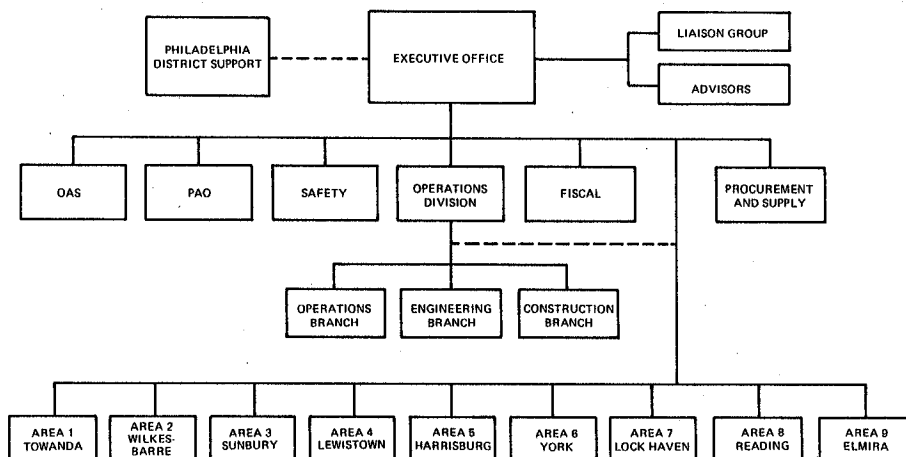
Discussions on the shape of the new organization were held between Groves; Hesse; Major General J.W. Morris, director of the Directorate of Civil Works in the Office of the Chief of Engineers; the North Atlantic Division comptroller, and others. From these meetings emerged a draft structure for the Susquehanna District. It was returned to NAD for finalization on 13 July, after review by the Directorate of Civil Works. Though Groves and other officials at NAD had envisioned a temporary district, Civil Works felt some of the staff levels put forward in the initial proposal too high.

"Planning liaison" and "program development" branches seemed unnecessary, and Civil Works recommended that personnel and data processing functions could be satellited to existing districts.⁵

On 14 July, while the North Atlantic Division reworked the Susquehanna District organization, the Chief of Engineers issued General Order No. 19, establishing the U.S. Army Engineer District, Susquehanna, effective 17 July. That same day NAD issued General Order No. 14, directing the Susquehanna District engineer to "perform all missions assigned under Public Law 91-606 in connection with... Agnes Recovery Operations and such other missions as may be assigned by NAD or OEP." Anticipated mission assignments fell in the categories of emergency work, inspection work, permanent restoration and coordination with other agencies.

Susquehanna District's boundaries enveloped the Schuylkill and Susquehanna River basins and included territory normally within the civil works boundaries of the Baltimore, Philadelphia and New York Districts. Its headquarters were placed in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania's state capital, to facilitate Corps of Engineers' coordination with and response to OEP and other federal and state agencies. Based on information available the second week in July, the Corps estimated that just under \$50

ORGANIZATION OF SUSQUEHANNA DISTRICT



million of work would be handled by Susquehanna District by 1 October.⁶

The decision had already been made by 13 July that Colonel John F. McElhenny, deputy director of postal construction in the Office of the Chief of Engineers in Washington, would be Susquehanna District engineer.⁷ McElhenny was an admirable choice. His service with the Corps had begun during World War II and, in the ensuing years, had included positions as district engineer of the Jacksonville (Fla.) District and as commander of engineer troop units in Europe, Korea and Vietnam. McElhenny had had some disaster experience while serving with the Omaha Engineer District in the mid-1950's and the Jacksonville District in the 1960's. Division Engineer Groves, who had known and worked with McElhenny before, believed he had been given a "wonderful leader" and a "very fine officer." After conducting a day-long briefing for McElhenny, Groves never had to remind him of his responsibilities again. "He just took it from there," the division engineer recalled.⁸

General Groves officially announced the formation of the new Susquehanna District at Harrisburg on 17 July and introduced McElhenny to Pennsylvania Governor Milton J. Schapp. During the next few days, the administrative transition from the Baltimore District to the Susquehanna District was carried out smoothly while work on Corps mission assignments continued virtually uninterrupted.

NAD submitted its final organization proposal and mission statement on the 19th, the job of staffing the new district proceeded, and the General Services Administration made arrangements on 24 July to house the district office in the U.S. Steel Corporation Building in Shiremanstown, Pa., a few miles west of the state capital.

On 20 July, the Chief of Engineers and his deputy, General Groves, Colonel Prentiss and others were briefed on the Susquehanna District mission and toured Harrisburg, Wilkes-Barre and Elmira. It was the first of several visits made to SED by officials from NAD and the Chief's Office.

OEP Director George A. Lincoln lauded the establishment of the Susquehanna District as a

means of making "the Corps even more effective in its flood recovery activities."⁹ Baltimore District Engineer Prentiss, whose organization had been dealing with the bulk of the relief effort now being placed under Susquehanna District, still felt capable of handling the whole job. Only later did he view the new district as "the best thing to happen" because it allowed Baltimore to devote more time to other long-term projects.¹⁰ Groves had recognized that the move to establish SED might be a blow to the pride of the Baltimore District. He thought Baltimore was doing a good job, but "they weren't doing some of the other things they were supposed to be doing." Groves did not want to pay so high a price when he could get another organization to do the job.¹¹ Now he had it.

Trying to put together a district operation in only a matter of days presented a tremendous logistical challenge. First, office space had to be found; then, furniture, office machines and telephones installed; and finally, personnel located and transported to the district. And all of these demands arose as the Engineers recovery effort continued to expand.

While a lease for the district headquarters was being finalized, district employees already on the scene set up their temporary operations center in a conference room of a nearby motel. Other elements of the district shared office space with the Harrisburg Area Office. On 26 July furniture arrived from Philadelphia. First priority was establishing the Susquehanna District Operations Center. Eleven two-man telephone crews worked long hours to ready the vital communication lines. By the early morning hours of 1 August, the center was a going concern.

As noted, Susquehanna District's structure was modified from the normal district organization in recognition of the district's temporary status. It was heavy on technical people and dependent on other districts for administrative support. Recognizing that the Philadelphia District had "a number of key people who were very capable," had fairly recent experience with disasters, and was both sizable enough and close enough, NAD asked Philadelphia to provide legal, personnel, contract, procurement and

supply, administrative services and data processing assistance to SED.¹² Philadelphia District responded enthusiastically though the task was demanding.

General Order 14 establishing the Susquehanna District made the district engineer "responsible for establishing and maintaining for all elements of the Corps of Engineers a single point of contact with the State and Federal Agencies involved in disaster relief activities within his area." The district engineer had to divide his time between the district and area offices; and, because of the extensive damage in Luzerne County, he spent considerable time visiting projects managed by the Wilkes-Barre Area Office. Coordination with top government officials and briefings for Corps of Engineers superiors, which meant a heavy schedule of meetings and travel, constituted a major part of Colonel McElhenny's job. McElhenny estimated that when work was at its busiest he had as many as three telephone conversations a day plus two visits a week with the North Atlantic Division engineer alone.¹³

The district engineer got contracting authority for all contracts over \$500,000 and special authority to designate contracting officers, a power usually reserved for the Chief of Engineers. Where negotiated contracts were used — as they often were for mobile home site construction and temporary house repairs — McElhenny, as contracting officer, became heavily involved in the lengthy process of defining contract terms. "It was a great pleasure . . .," recalled Mary Wilson, chief of procurement and supply with the Philadelphia District, "because you didn't have to go back and tell him why you did everything. He knew because he was there."¹⁴

In the Susquehanna District Executive Office, McElhenny was assisted by Lieutenant Colonel William D. Horton of the Albuquerque District and Al Newbern as deputy district engineer and executive assistant, respectively. Horton's major responsibility was to keep the district and area office staffs functioning smoothly. McElhenny specifically requested Newbern, who had been his executive assistant at Jacksonville District, because of his contract expertise. Flo Biehm, another veteran of the

Jacksonville District, was brought in as chief contract negotiator. Charles Flachbarth of Philadelphia District's legal department served as legal counsel for the Susquehanna District, spending much time on legal details of contract negotiation. The district engineer rightly recognized that contract administration would continue to be one of his major problem areas.

Crucial to the overall operation of Susquehanna District was the liaison section. The section was responsible for coordinating all Corps of Engineers activities with OEP and the other federal and state agencies involved in the recovery effort. Susquehanna's liaison section evolved naturally from the organization established in Harrisburg by the Baltimore District when Agnes first hit. Lieutenant Colonel Charles E. Eastburn, deputy district engineer in Charleston, S.C., was brought in to direct liaison activities for the new district. He was assisted by a captain. A civilian representative from Pittsburgh District joined them to coordinate activities between the two districts and with the single OEP organization in Pennsylvania. Liaison with OEP's New York State office was carried on directly by the district engineer and the Elmira area engineer.

The liaison section became a central clearinghouse for information about the district's activities. Ringing telephones were a constant fact of life. "Anybody that had a question," Eastburn recollected, "... didn't call the district. They called the liaison officer."¹⁵ Indeed, considerable time was spent handling inquiries involving areas where the Corps lacked responsibility. At one point, for example, a federal agency referred persons calling it with questions about its own programs to the Corps of Engineers for the answers! As Eastburn recalled, victims and agencies "found very quickly that if any particular problem came up, they would get the fastest response from the Corps."¹⁶ At the state level, a major source of inquiries to the liaison section was the Governor's Flood Action Committee, a group running a toll-free hot line for flood victims. Still, handling such calls enabled the section to fulfill an important function: it acted as a screen for other offices in the district.

The liaison officer not only spent hours on

the phone; he spent hours in meetings with OEP and with officials from the governor's office and other agencies. Many meetings occurred regularly each day or week. Others were called without notice. But whenever they were held, the Engineers' liaison officer, at the very least, was expected to attend.

Overall the liaison section's most critical activities were its contacts with the Office of Emergency Preparedness. And those contacts were made easier and more effective by the personal relationship that developed between OEP's Director of Public Assistance Joe Winkle and SED's Eastburn. "Joe Winkle and I were closer than any other two people up there." Eastburn emphasized. "We had confidence and trust in each other." That rapport was especially helpful when it came to OEP tasking of the Corps, where initial discussions often involved a verbal agreement. Eastburn felt he could reach an understanding with Winkle over a cup of coffee any time and know that it would be good.¹⁷

The second week in August, the Susquehanna District's liaison section underwent a major change. At that time President Nixon named Frank Carlucci, an official in the Office of Management and Budget and a Wilkes-Barre native, to be his personal representative in the Wyoming Valley. Carlucci was ordered to coordinate all federal activity in the area, a move designed to cut through existing bureaucratic red tape. On the 16th, OEP moved its Pennsylvania headquarters from Harrisburg to Wilkes-Barre to be nearer Carlucci. SED decided to split its liaison section in response to these developments and named Lieutenant Colonel Russell A. Hewitt, deputy engineer in the Fort Worth (Texas) District, to the new position of Wilkes-Barre liaison officer.

Susquehanna District continued to maintain a liaison section in Harrisburg, rather than move the whole operation to Wilkes-Barre. The reason for this, in Colonel Eastburn's words, was that "my contacts were more with Joe Winkle than others, and with the state."¹⁸ From that point on, the Harrisburg section handled all liaison outside Luzerne County.

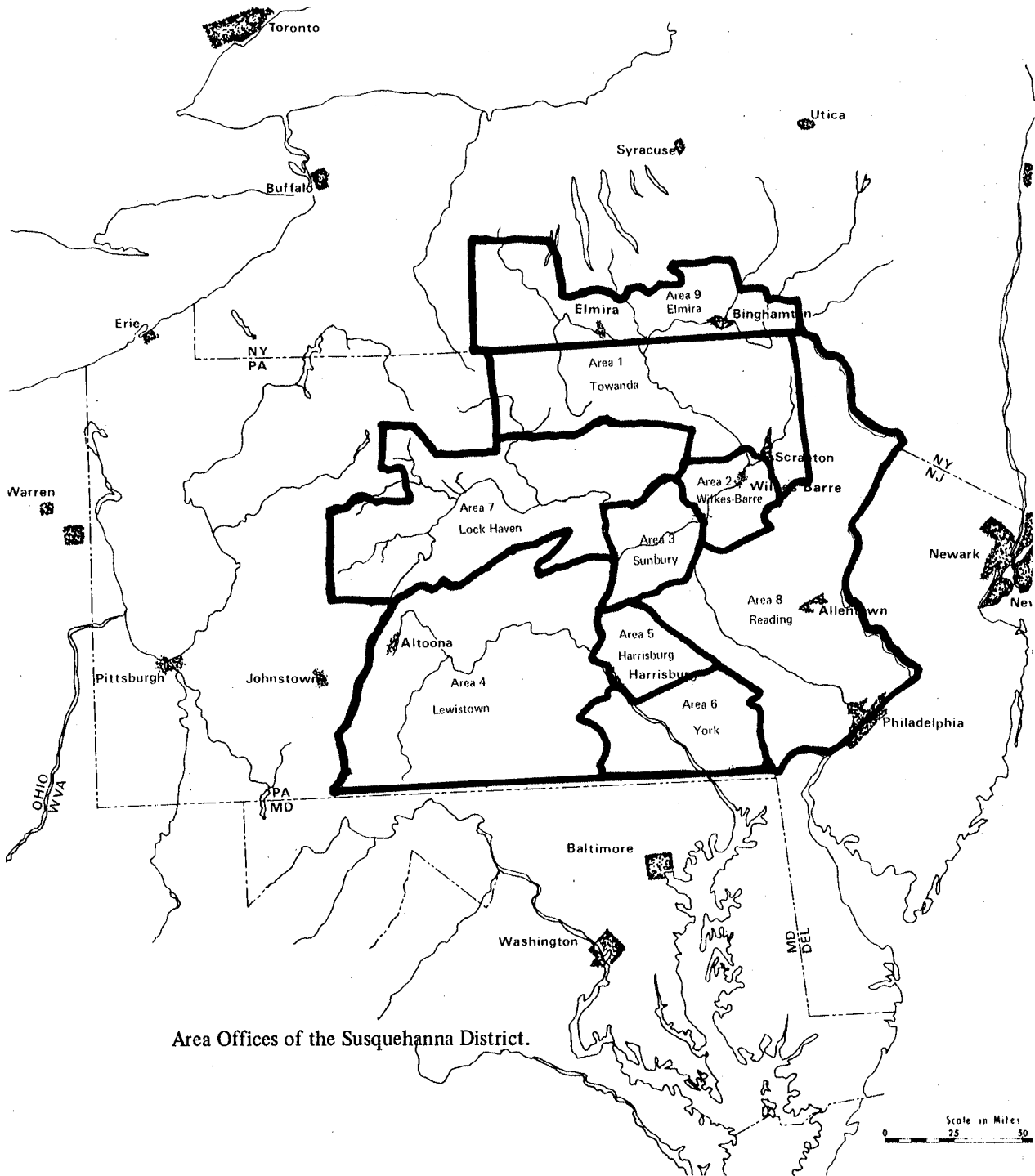
Unlike the typical district organization, Susquehanna District had an operations division

comprising operations, construction and engineering branches, an arrangement the district engineer felt best tailored to his mission.¹⁹ Lieutenant Colonel Christ F. Potamos, stationed with the Sacramento District as deputy district engineer, and at the time actually involved in fighting a flood in California, got control of this crucial arm of SED.

The operations branch was actually the district emergency operations center — the district "war room." It was the clearing-house for all reports from the field on Corps activities and maintained around-the-clock telephone and telecopier contact with the district's area offices, with the emergency operations centers in other districts and in higher headquarters. Following the pattern adopted earlier in the Baltimore District, Susquehanna's Operations Officer Major Thomas Reed Bennett was assisted by an area coordinator for each area office and by coordinators for Bailey bridges, mobile home sites and personnel. As operations officer, Bennett was responsible for giving periodic briefings at the district engineer's staff meetings.²⁰

Emergency operations center personnel spent a great deal of time preparing progress reports to keep all elements in the Corps abreast of SED's mission status. So heavy was the workload by 1 August that another major, Bernard Jacang of the Louisville District, was brought in to assist Bennett. Captain Boyd Ashcraft was utilized to coordinate Bailey bridge activities and aircraft support with the U.S. First Army.

The operations division's other two branches, engineering and construction, also played major roles in district activity. Civilian engineer William Eng, the operations division deputy director, supervised these branches. Engineering was responsible for formulating or reviewing plans and specifications for projects involving the Corps, though much of this type of work was let to private architect-engineering firms. The branch's high-level civilian engineers provided SED area offices with considerable technical advice. Once a contract was awarded, supervision was transferred to the construction branch, charged with seeing that plans and specifications were followed. Inspection was a major activity of the construction branch.



Susquehanna District's public affairs, administrative services and safety offices were manned by fewer personnel though their contributions to the district's success were nonetheless essential. SED placed a disbursing officer within its small fiscal office, a move that district officials felt essential to gaining the trust and confidence of contractors. Another disbursing officer was stationed with the Wilkes-Barre Area Office to give even greater contract payment capability where it was most needed.

The procurement and supply branch was quickly reduced from its initially projected size because of the extensive part Philadelphia District played in that area. Mary Wilson, chief of the procurement and supply division in Philadelphia at the time, was crucial to the success of Susquehanna District operations. She had construction contracting authority up to \$500,000, except in the case of architect-engineers, where she was limited to \$25,000. That Miss Wilson had any contracting authority for architect-engineers was unusual: it was normally limited to the district engineer or his deputy.

Augmented by temporary duty personnel, Miss Wilson's staff in Philadelphia handled a substantial amount of the Susquehanna District's contract paperwork. Whenever possible Chief Wilson saved time by signing papers that otherwise would have required action by the peripatetic McElhenny. Hundreds of questions on contracting were funneled to the group in Philadelphia. "The office telecopier would start to beep around seven in the morning," Miss Wilson recalled. "I even took one home on weekends when I wasn't planning to come back into Philadelphia." According to Mary Wilson, many in the field had limited contract experience, "but they had enough sense to call when they were in trouble. We had a pretty cooperative . . . effort going, which really is all that got us through."²¹

The Susquehanna District's nine area offices, taken over from the New York, Philadelphia and Baltimore Districts, were the instruments in the field for accomplishing SED's mission. Recognizing that a primary aim of the district was to support the area offices, Colonel

McElhenny ordered his staff to make "prompt and vigorous response" to problems raised by the area engineers.²²

Negotiation and administration of contracts, inspection of area projects, and liaison with local communities were the main concerns of an area office. All but the Wilkes-Barre Area Office comprised several counties.

Each office was headed by an area engineer, but the organization varied from place to place depending on the size of the local recovery effort. Thus the Wilkes-Barre, Harrisburg and Corning-Elmira Area Offices were largest in terms of personnel and the most complex in structure. Wilkes-Barre Area Office — which operated during July and August from the Daniel J. Flood Elementary School — at one time had a maximum personnel strength of 165, while maximum strength for the Lewistown Area Office was five and for the York Area Office, eight. In terms of personnel and organization, the office in Wilkes-Barre resembled a typical district office more than an area office. Harrisburg Area Office was unique: it was collocated with the district office and, if necessary, could draw on its employees.

The Harrisburg Area Office divided into sub-areas with a captain in charge of each. As sub-area engineer, he had \$10,000 contracting authority and could execute on-the-spot work agreements. He directed a team of estimators, inspectors, and structural, electrical and mechanical engineers. Primarily to eliminate non-productive travel time, the Towanda Area Office used project or resident offices in each of the counties under its jurisdiction. These arrangements provided good examples of the decentralization of authority and decision-making that characterized the entire Corps operation.

The area engineer was the key individual in the field office structure. Part of his duties included responsibility for overseeing all phases of the contracts under his supervision, for running an efficient office, for maintaining good public relations, and for keeping accurate records and making required reports. High-level civilian engineers or majors headed the largest area offices, while captains were more commonly found with civilians in smaller area

offices. The area engineer's contracting authority, up to \$100,000 when SED was first activated, was a measure of the responsibility placed on him.

Major Robert Cook, area engineer in Wilkes-Barre after 6 August, estimated that he spent 40 percent of his time dealing with necessary contract-associated office functions such as negotiations, signatures and contract changes. Another 40 percent of his time was spent observing project status, a most important requirement to keep informed of the constantly changing situation in the field. The final 20 percent of Cook's time was devoted to coordinating Corps of Engineers efforts with those of other federal agencies.²³ The work was tough. Area engineers took criticism and pressure from disaster victims, municipal and state officials, and Congressmen. Eighteen- or 20-hour days were common for the area engineer and the key people on his staff. Susquehanna District seems fortunate to have had a most competent group of men serve as area engineers.

When District Engineer McElhenny arrived in Harrisburg, the personnel needs of the area offices were one of his major concerns. Manning the district office was another. Although Susquehanna District took over existing area offices and their personnel, the temporary duty assignments of many were nearing an end. Moreover SED's initial personnel requirements were greater than the number already employed. Because the Corps' mission was continually changing, still further additions were expected. Under these conditions, to get together a workable staff at all levels of the district was a real challenge.

In a repeat of what had occurred when the Agnes disaster first struck, temporary duty personnel were brought in from all across the country to man the Susquehanna District. Typists, stenographers, engineers, draftsmen, accountants, captains, majors and colonels left their home districts and made their way by bus, car, train and plane to the district. A late night phone call often informed of departure early the next day. SED's new personnel were quickly processed, briefed and placed at their assignments, the goal being full activation at the

earliest possible moment.

Most of the civilians had volunteered for their temporary assignments. Although they could stay on when those ended, many returned home where families and back-logged work awaited them. For some, the kind of atmosphere involved — it seemed the domestic equivalent of war — was reason enough to come.

SED relied on three types of personnel — Corps of Engineers military officers, Corps civilians on temporary duty assignment and local-hires. The largest group was temporary duty civilians, but the number of local-hires rose continually as the number of civilians declined, until early October when the strength of the two groups was about equal.

A substantial number of the officers serving in the district were holdovers among the captains brought in late in June from the Engineer Officers Advanced Course at Fort Belvoir. A change in the initial group occurred at the end of July when 25 new officers were assigned to the district. Though the men in the first group were gaining valuable experience, the North Atlantic Division engineer no longer wanted them to miss classes. Completion of the advanced course was a vital step in their careers.²⁴

Military on temporary duty, except for those from Fort Belvoir, and civilians customarily came for assignments varying from 30 to 45 days, though longer stays were not uncommon. In a move designed to relieve pressure on the districts and to tap a reservoir of proven talent, many retired Corps of Engineers personnel — both civilian and military — were recalled to serve as contract negotiators, auditors, engineers, inspectors and estimators. A special source of temporary duty personnel that greatly benefited the Susquehanna District was the Huntsville (Ala.) Division of the Corps of Engineers. A unique situation existed there: Huntsville's normal mission — ABM missile site construction — had been significantly curtailed, making available a select pool of highly qualified people. Huntsville sent an especially large contingent of engineers to the disaster area. Among the positions they held were operations division deputy director, Harrisburg and Sun-

bury area engineers, and head of the Wilkes-Barre Area Office construction section.

Under the direction of Huntsville's Jerold B. VanFaasen, the Harrisburg Area Office in particular made a deliberate effort to draw upon established contacts in the ABM program. After all, one participant recalled, it was preferable to get people whose ability and performance were known.²⁵ The result, in the Harrisburg Area Office at least, was a relatively high degree of stability and continuity.

It was Susquehanna District's policy to get men and women from local communities wherever possible. Hiring such people not only helped relieve unemployment problems growing out of the flood situation, it also allowed civilians on temporary assignment to get back home earlier and it saved money.²⁶ The overtime and per diem paid to temporary duty personnel generally exceeded pay for those hired locally. At first there was apprehension about their understanding of government and Corps procedures; but in Harrisburg, for example, a nucleus of temporary people was retained to provide continuity while the local-hire group was expanded.

Local-hires eventually filled all kinds of positions in administrative, professional and clerical categories. The district personnel liaison was impressed by the quality of engineers hired locally. District Engineer McElhenny and others voiced much praise for the local-hires utilized at all levels throughout the district.²⁷ The fact that nearly all were friends or relatives of Agnes' victims, if not victims themselves, gave the local-hires a strong impetus to make the district's mission succeed. Moreover, according to one area engineer, "an unexpected benefit was their ability to effect closer liaison between the Corps and various local officials."²⁸ In several cases the Corps profited long-term when employees picked up as local-hires during the Agnes operation stayed on afterward.

Getting personnel — whether military or civilian, temporary duty or local-hire — presented difficulties. Requests for temporary duty assignments went through the Chief's Office and from there were forwarded to Corps districts and divisions across the country. They then had to look at their own existing demands

to determine where personnel could be spared and whom they could send. Lieutenant Colonel Eastburn, SED's liaison officer, explained that his district, the Charleston District, had the lowest workload in the Southeastern Division and that other districts in that division had recently undergone personnel changes, making it difficult for them to spare manpower. That he was a lieutenant colonel and that he was available decided it. He was the man for the job.²⁹

Philadelphia District sent Thomas Muldowney from its own personnel office to serve as personnel liaison for Susquehanna District. Muldowney helped screen personnel requests from the area offices and set about the difficult task of finding local-hires. Area office requests had to be reviewed to determine if positions were essential and had been properly classified. For example, requests might call for an engineer where a less qualified individual would suffice. Given a tight supply and the pressure of time, personnel officials acted accordingly.³⁰

In Harrisburg Muldowney was confronted with the basic problem of identifying a pool of workers. State records of previous employees would ordinarily have helped, but they were damaged beyond use. Clerical workers are normally in short supply in a state capital, and now other federal agencies were expanding their own operations, a situation making competition for the available labor keen.

SED asked local radio and television stations and newspapers for free advertising to attract applicants. To be more competitive, pay rates were adjusted above usual entry levels. In the early days, Muldowney recruited personally in restaurants, on the streets, anywhere that he thought qualified people out of work might be found. District representatives often had to plead and cajole to convince a potential employee that working for the Corps was best. This was not the preferred way of running a personnel operation, but under the circumstances it was probably the only way. And it worked remarkably well.

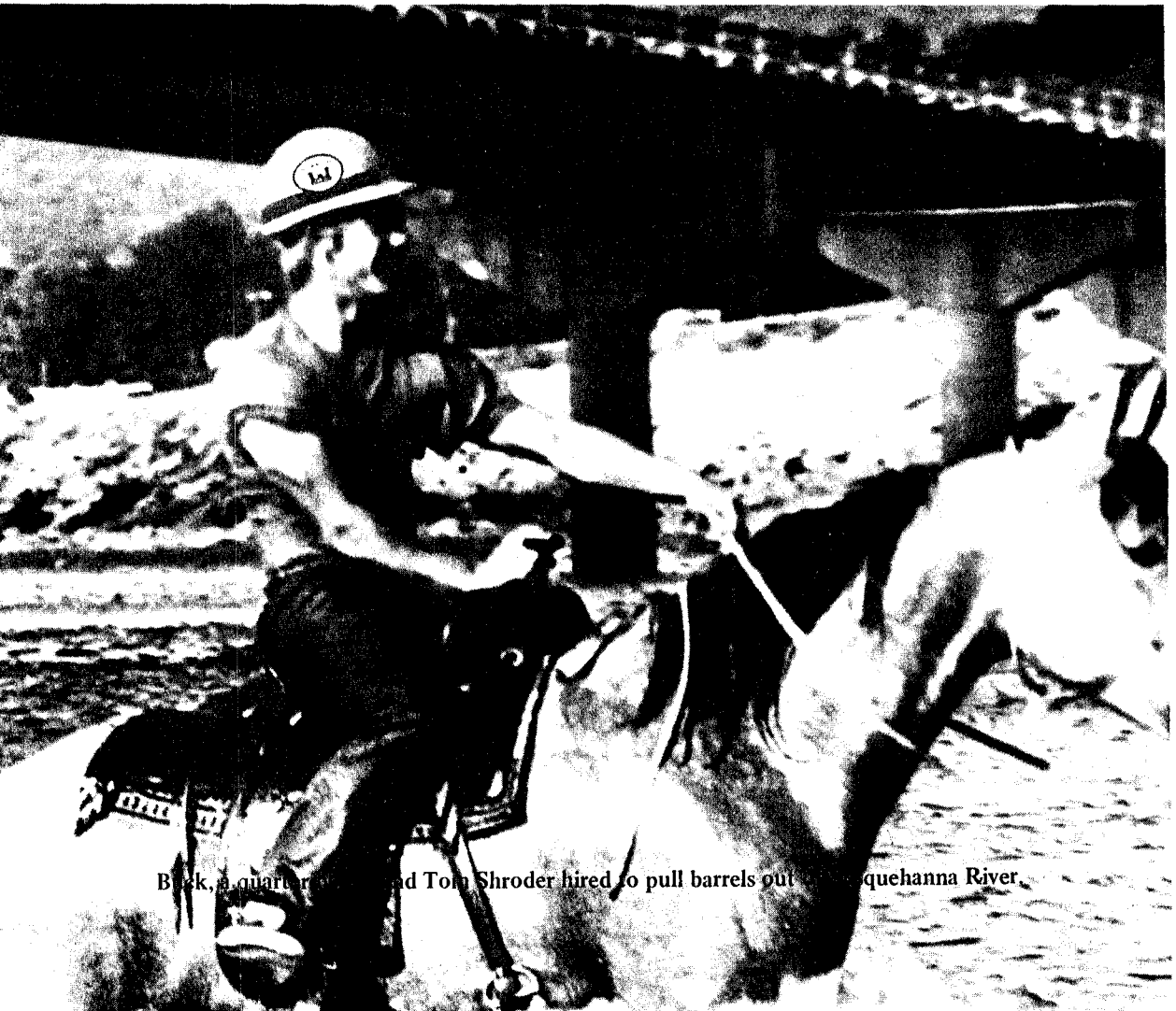
* The nature of the Susquehanna District and its sources of manpower inevitably created personnel turbulence, a condition widely recognized as a problem within the district. SED

employees borrowed from other districts were continually coming and going, often with little or no overlap. This was unfortunate because so many people lacked experience with OEP's disaster procedures and because successful interaction with state and local officials generally resulted from established personal contacts. But there was another side to the problem. Disaster operations were physically draining, families needed their fathers and mothers, and home districts and divisions had ongoing missions to fulfill. For the most part these districts had sent good people to SED, and they wanted them back.

During Susquehanna District operations, some effort was made to alleviate the effects of

personnel turbulence by accelerating the use of local-hires and where possible extending temporary assignments, but the problem remained. In later assessments of the district's performance, nearly all participants noted the unsettling effects of manning a district with temporary-duty employees. But disagreement persisted on how personnel changes influenced district performance and on ways to eliminate the worst aspects of the problem.

In late July SED leaders and their superiors justifiably expressed pride in the manner in which they had put together their temporary organization. But they knew the real test would be their performance of existing and future mission assignments.



Black, a quarter horse, and Tom Shroder hired to pull barrels out of the Susquehanna River.